A Resume of Ph. D. Thesis entitled

The world of Nigeria

In the Select novels of Buchi Emecheta

Submitted to:

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Title of the Research:

The World of Nigeria in the Select novels of Buchi Emecheta

1 Introduction:

African women writers have been publishing books for almost as long as male writers. Literary critics have more or less remained disinterested in their works .Many female African writers have contributed for the sake of African women's neglect in throughout the decades and their works pushed aside to make way for the works of the male writers .Many women writers from Africa had written works from 1970s to 1900s. Grace Ogot (1930-2015), Flora Nwapa (1931-1993), Bessie Head (1937-1986), Adaora Lily Ulasi (1932). Bessie Head deals with issues of racism and gender discrimination and her works are powerful descriptions of African men and women in the face of change in political circumstances of South Africa. More recently women writers include Noviolet Bulewayo (1981) from Zimbabwe who was shortlisted for 2013 Man Booker Prize for her novel ' Ne Need New Names'(2013). The Institution of polygamy is considered as a social necessity in the Igbo setting. However, it reduces women to mere acquisitions who exist for the benefit of the man. The writers named Chinua Achebe, Wole Soyinka and Chimamanda Nagozi Adichie have projected Nigeria in their novels. While describing Nigeria, they focused on the customs, oral traditions, folklores, social, cultural, political and economical issues of Nigerian people .They also illustrated post-colonial conditions through their novels.

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Buchi Emecheta was born in Lagos, Nigeria on July, 1944. She immigrated to London, England in 1960. She received a Sociology degree at the University of London. She worked as a social worker for a number of years and contributed a column to the new statesmen about black British life. She wrote 20 novels during her lifetime including *The Joys of Motherhood, The Rape of Shavi , Second Class Citizen, Into the Ditch, The Bride Price and The New Tribe, Double Yoke, Kehindle, Destination Biafra and Gwendolen* etc. Her first play, A *Kind of Marriage* was screened on BBC TV in 1976 and was entitled *Head above Water*. In 2005, she was made an OBE for services to literature.

Through her works Buchi Emecheta throws light on various themes related to African women's struggle for freedom and identity. For the sake of their rights, they fight against this oppression and want freedom from the patriarchal dominance. So, identity is an important part of black women's literature. Race, gender, and ethnicity are all components of one's identity. Buchi Emecheta is also the author of several novels for children including *Nowhere to Play* (1980) and *The Moonlight Bride* (1980). She published a volume of autobiography, *Head above Water*, in 1980. Her television play, *A Kind of Marriage*, was first screened by the BBC in 1976.

2) **Review of Literature**:

Some researchers have already done their research on Buchi Emecheta . There are many areas which are discovered through their writings. There are many M.Phil' s dissertations and Ph.d theses are written on Buchi Emecheta's works .Priya Raghav's

dissertation of MPhil :*'Writing Herself:a Critical Study of Buchi Emecheta's Novels'* . Priya's main focus is on Buchi Emecheta as black diasporic women who write about the black female experiences in different locations. *Gender Motherhood and Slavery: a Study of some Selected Novels of Buchi Emecheta* by Talukdar Aparna. It is a dissertation of M. Phil, in which she throws light on woman and her duties as a mother .How she spent all her life for her family .Women are considered secondary. So, they have not any importance in patriarchal society. They have to face 'gender discrimination'. It is a study on norms of society. Emecheta has tried her best through her writing to make the women realise what and how they have been treated as and what they actually deserve. Another dissertation of MPhil written by Dolly V. is a *'Buchi Emecheta as an African feminist: A Study of Her Novels'*. This is an attempt to conceptualize the force that drives the work of an African female writer, Buchi Emecheta. She embodies the spirit of African feminism and her important role in exposing the suppression of women in the patriarchal society. 'Quest for Black Female Identity in the Novels of Toni Morrison and Buchi Emecheta: a Comparative study' is a dissertation of M. Phil by Devi Anitem Athanthem. Gita Sharma also completed her MPhil on Buchi Emecheta with the title,' Feminist Perspectives in Selected Works of Margaret Atwood, Buchi Emecheta and Shashi Deshpande'. It deals with the social perspectives, economic perspective and sexual and psychological perspective.

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Many researchers have also selected their Ph.D. theses on Buchi Emecheta's works. 'Speaking Subaltern: A Study of Selected Novels of Ngugi Wa Thiango and Buchi Emecheta' by Heenaba K. Zala. in which she gives critical comments on novels like *Bride price, The Slave Girl, Second Class Citizen, Joys of Motherhood*. The researcher also defines the concept of subaltern. 'The Feminine Consciousness in the Novels of Alice Walker's *The Colour Purple*, Bapsi Sidhwa's *Ice Candy Man* and Buchi Emecheta's *The Bride Price'* by K. Dhanalakshmi. In this thesis, she throws light on Buchi's interest in how gender intersects and engages with education, poverty and enslavement.

'Restructuring Gender Relations Patriarchy and the Novels of Buchi Emecheta' by Himakshi Barman in this Ph.D thesis, she makes an attempt to show how Emecheta uses education as a tool or strategy in her novels to make her women characters conscious of the limitations posed upon them by a traditional society as well as to make them realize their own potentials and capabilities. Another thesis is by Sujarani Mathe ,' Imaginary African Womanhood: a Womanist reading of Selected Works of Buchi Emecheta.' This study is an analysis of the three phrases in the development of the women of African historically- the pre-colonial, post colonial and immigrant period.

3 Hypotheses of the Research:

1. The domestic abuse and double standards at the societal level is seen in Africa.
2. The slavery and brutal history of colonization is evident in Africa.

3. Buchi Emecheta throws light on social, cultural, economical and political issues through her novels.
4. The conflict between tradition and western influence is highlighted through her novel.
5. The inimical world makes African people alienated and marginalized.
6. There is a conflict between the old and the new world of African people.
7. Most of Nigerian people live in harsh and inhuman condition.
8. People's culture is inseparable from their indigenous language which explains their norms and values.

4 Importance of Research:

The present research work would prove useful and relevant as it would throw light upon the themes of the selected novels by Buchi Emecheta. The study of her novels and relative significance will be seen. It will be a reliable documentation of the novelist which will give new direction to the researchers. It will provide the researchers with the detailed discussion on the above said themes. The discussed issues will be equally valuable to the scholars, readers and researchers.

5 Aims and Objectives of Research:

1. To highlight the factors shaping and making of the African literature and culture.
2. To understand the culture and society in the novels by Buchi Emcheta.
3. To study the style of the language used by Nigerian people
4. To focus on the socio-economic cultural, religious and political aspects of life reflected in Buchi Emecheta's select novels.
5. To examine Nigerian experience and lifestyle
6. To understand the sources of oral narratives
7. To explore the regional aspects of Nigeria
8. To understand the contemporary context of the novels of Buchi Emecheta.
9. To discuss the new dimensions of the selected novels.

7. Scope and Limitations of the Research:

The present research work accommodates the select fictional works of the Buchi Emecheta. The study material has been collected from the primary and the secondary sources concerned. The research work will help the researches in Humanities and Social Sciences. It has in itself its own significance as a study in literature and literary

criticism. It will also provide certain literary perceptions of the novelist in the context of Nigeria.

The limitation of the research work is that it explores the different aspects of Nigeria in the select fictional world of Buchi Emecheta. The present research has focused critically on the select eight novels by Buchi Emecheta respectively, *1.In the Ditch, 2.Second Class Citizen, 3.The Bride Price, 4.The Slave Girl, 5. The Joys of Motherhood, 6. Gwendolen 7.Destination Biafra and 8.Double Yoke.*

8. Data Collection:

The data required for the present research work will be collected in two ways as follows

Primary Data:

The primary data will be the novels written by Buchi Emecheta which are selected for the further minute critical study to point out the distinctive aspects of Nigeria. These novels include *1. In the Ditch, 2. Second Class Citizen, 3.The Bride Price, 4.The Slave Girl, 5.The Joys of Motherhood and 6.Gwendolen* 7. *Destination Biafra 8.*Double Yoke.

Secondary Data:

The secondary data will be collected from the different critical books, journals, articles, reviews, critical analysis, web materials, newspapers, different reports published on Buchi Emecheta and selected novels for further study in the present research. It will also be collected from personal visits to the state level national level and international conferences etc.

9. Plan of Research work:

Chapter One: Introduction

The First Chapter presents the preliminary background information and the context of the research work along with the thematic preliminaries delineating the significance of *The World of Nigeria in the Select Novels of Buchi Emecheta*. The chapter **Introduction** deals with the short account of postcolonial literature and covers the major tenets of African literature. The chapter comprises the study of the novels in accordance with the culture, language, history and socio-political issues. .It also states the aims and objectives of the research, scope, its limitations, research methodology, hypotheses, review of literature, and significance and relevance of the

research work and chapter scheme of the research work. It elaborates the major literary terms related to the research topic and includes an overview of African Literature and the specificity of the African literature and world view is highlighted. The major literary terms and concepts, some key forms, themes and figures related to the research topic such as colonialism, imperialism, and slavery are explained and correlation between literature and society and its political cultural and social ties have been explained. The first chapter also clarifies the development of African novel. Besides the above observation, a brief account of the author selected for the research purpose, Buchi Emecheta"s biography and her literary career which comprises her craftsmanship, originality, linguistic experiments and the major themes of her novels and contemplation of the different issues existed in the contemporary African society has been stated in this chapter .

Chapter Two:

Community and Culture in *In the Ditch* and *Second Class Citizen*

This chapter explores critically the oppression of women, the role of education in Nigerian people and Western influence on their life. The novel *In the Ditch* is the struggle of a character named Adah who is forced to live in housing estate while working as a librarian to support her children. She also describes the suffering and agonies in African society. She shows the theme of racism, sexism and poverty. Further, she talks about domestic abuse of double standards at the societal level. The cultures of poverty and value systems are prominent. The society depicted in the novel is economically deprived, uneducated and unsupported. The novel *Second Class Citizen* talks about Adah who is being denied a Western education because she is a girl. This novel characterizes Adah as having the initiative determination to get what she wants- the western education being denied to her. In this novel, the novelist has made us of Nigerian English, biblical allusions, proverbs and sayings. This novel unfolds religious beliefs and culture adopted by Nigerian people.

Chapter Three:

Representation of Nigeria in *The Joys of Motherhood* and *The Slave Girl*

The present chapter explains the representation of Nigeria **in *The Joys of Motherhood* and *The Slave Girl.*** *The Joys of Motherhood* is novel by Emecheta which explore the life of Nigerian woman. She tries to show the changes that came over with colonialism in Nigeria and how women like Nnu Ego coped with

it. In Igbo culture, motherhood is considered the definition of womanhood. She throws light on patriarchal society. She also speaks of the struggles of conflicts of black women and the gender roles imposed upon them. The novel *The Slave Girl* moves around the fortunes of Ogbanje Ojebeta. The novel is a story of a Nigerian woman who was an orphan as a child. Becoming an Orphan was a tragedy, but her life was cursed as he was sold into slavery. Emecheta shows the complexities of slavery within the social system of British colonial Africa. The theme of the novel is concerned with the oppression as a woman and the self-awakening in patriarchal society. Both the novels depict the Nigerian world.

Chapter Four: Depiction of Nigeria in the novels of the Bride Price and Gwendolen

This chapter portrays the language, culture, philosophy, tradition and customs of Africa. *The Bride Price* is a well known novel by Emecheta. It is a story of a young girl Akunna who is kind, gentle, shy and lonely. It describes the fight of a young girl against the tradition. She becomes a source of earning for her father. The novel depicts the problems of women in postcolonial Nigeria. The social, cultural, political and economical issues are also projected through the novel. *Gwendolen* is another novel by Buchi Emecheta. It is a story of oppression of women. The novel points out several phases of a women's development into womanhood. The novel focuses how class distinction affects on the lives of black people. The novel highlights the ending suffering tale of African women.

Chapter Five: Nigerian Society and Culture *in Destination Biafra and Double Yoke*

The present chapter is an account of Nigerian world. The social, cultural, political, economical issues are elucidated through the writings of Buchi Emcheta.The novel *Destination Biafra* gives the details of Nigeria at the time of Biafran War which took place from 1967 to 1970.It deals with English administrative officers, tribal leaders, Nigerian political heads, and common people of Nigeria. It revolves around two central characters Debbie Ogedemgbe and Alan Grey. Debbie is a young Nigerian woman educated at Oxford and makes up her mind to join the army. She is in love with Alan Grey.The novel *Doble Yoke* is concerned with contemporary Nigeria. The novel is set on the campus of a Nigerian university. It is a story of two young under-graduates, Ete Kamba and Nko. The novelist highlights the transition period. The

transition period is characterized by moral confusion and disorder. The changes are required in rapidly changing society. The changes are made in courtship, role models, social attitudes, ethics and relationships between men and women.

Chapter Six: Conclusion

The final chapter is conclusion in the present research work and the chapter is aimed at to summing up the arguments of the preceding chapters on the basis of the research done on the selected novels of Buchi Emecheta and ultimately arriving at certain expected and studied conclusions .The chapter also proves or clears the hypotheses of the research work.

10. Research Methodology:

The present research does not call for any fieldwork and hence M. L. A. method of research would be followed. The research will be based on the critical analysis of the selected novels and the comments on the novels by critics. Critical analysis will be the central agenda for the proposed research. Since the proposed research work needs no fieldwork, the texts of selected novels, the reference books, journals, interviews, websites etc. will be referred.

11 **Places of work and Facilities available:**

The present research work will be carried out at School of Language, literature and Culture Studies,, S.R.T. M. University, Nanded, which has a well equipped library with a number of books. Internet facilities are also available there.

12. **Probable Date of Research Completion:**

The present research is proposed to be completed within the time limit as stipulated by Swami Ramanand Teerth Marathwada University,Nanded.

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